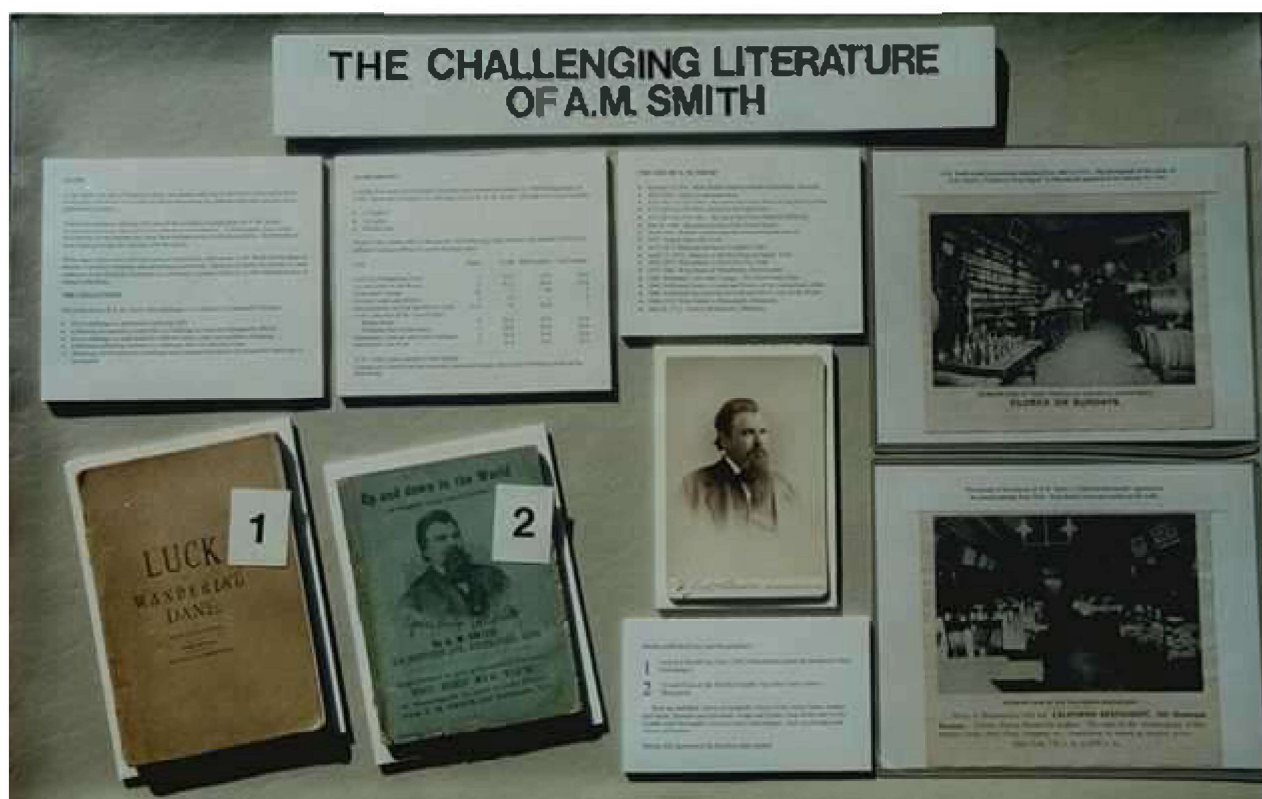


The Challenging Literature of A. M. Smith

Exhibited by Pete Smith
August 17, 1996



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Awards:

The Aaron Feldman Memorial Exhibit Award

First Place - Class XXII - Numismatic literature

The Thos. H. Law Award

Best First Time Exhibitor

The Howland Wood Memorial Award

Best-in-Show

The Challenging literature of A. M. Smith

SCOPE

A. M. Smith was one of America's early coin dealers and one of the first to write and publish numismatic references. Examples are shown illustrating the different titles and varieties of his numismatic literature.

There is no standard reference that lists all the varieties of publications of A. M. Smith. Numismatic literature sales give some indication of availability. Unfortunately, most of the descriptions are incomplete and many have included errors in the descriptions. Some notes on these catalog listings are included with the exhibit.

While many authors have left their name on numismatic publications, A.M. Smith left his name on dozens of product containers and advertising promotions. These are probably not familiar to most collectors of his literature. Examples are presented to expose collectors to this challenging area of related collectibles.

THE CHALLENGES

The publications of A. M. Smith offer challenges to a collector of numismatic literature.

- It is a challenge to understand confusing titles.
- Collecting an example of each title is a challenge as some are infrequently offered.
- It is a challenge to understand the different types, colors and qualities of binding.
- Collecting publishing varieties is a challenge since no reference exists.
- Acquiring this literature is a challenge since catalog descriptions are frequently inaccurate or incomplete.

AVAILABILITY

A study was made of numismatic literature sales conducted January 1, 1980 through June 30, 1996. These sales included 145 offerings of titles by A. M. Smith. The sales surveyed included:

- 15 dealers¹
- 156 sales
- 154,426 lots

Notes in this exhibit refer to this survey. The following table indicates the number of pieces in different bindings offered in recent literature sales:

Title	Paper	Cloth	Half Leather	Full Leather
Luck of a Wandering Dane	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Up and Down in the World	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coins and Coinage	10	3	48	3

Visitors Guide and History	2	15	1	2
Encyclopaedia of Gold and Silver Coins	N/A	29	N/A	1
Coin Collectors of the United States				
Single Issues	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
Complete Set of nine issues	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Numismatic Manual and Coin Catalogue	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Illustrated Coin Book	5	N/A	N/A	N/A

N/A = Title is not available in that binding. listings not counted include rebound copies and listings where type of binding could not be determined.

THE LIFE OF A. M. SMITH²

- February 4, 1841: Born Anders Madsen Smedt in Knudsbol, Denmark.
- 1857-1860 Sailor on merchant ships.
- 4/22/1861 to 10/2/1862: Served in the Union Army during the Civil War.
- 6/25/1863 to 7/8/1864: Served in the Union Navy.
- 12/1/1864 to 5/10/1866: Served in the Union Army in California.
- May 8, 1866: Became a citizen of the United States.
- 1868-1869 Worker constructing the transcontinental railroad.
- 1870 Farmer near Elko, Utah.
- 1871-1872 Railroad watchman in Ogden, Utah.
- April 17, 1872: Married to Botilla Elberg in Ogden, Utah.
- 1872-1875 Wine Dealer in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- 1875-1886 Wine Dealer in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- 1881 Published *Coins and Coinage, The United States Mint*.
- 1885 Published *Visitor's Guide and History of the United States Mint*.
- 1886 Published *Encyclopedia of Gold and Silver Coins of the World*.
- 1886-1915 Wine Dealer in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- July 20, 1915: Died in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Smith published two autobiographies:

- ¹ *Luck of a Wandering Dane* (1885) Philadelphia (under the pseudonym Hans Lykkejaeger)
- ² *Up and Down in the World or Paddle Your Own Canoe* (1891) Minneapolis

Both are Subtitled: Native of Denmark, Citizen of the United States, Soldier and Sailor, Moulder and Merchant, tramp and trader, Soap-boiler and Scribe, Peddler and Philosopher, Overseer and Understrapper, Jack of all-trades and Master of Fortune.

Neither title appeared in the literature sales studied.

A.M. Smith issued promotional calendars from 1889 to 1914. This photograph of the inside of A.M. Smith's "California Wine Depot" in Minneapolis appeared in his calendar for 1900.

Photograph of the interior of A.M. Smith's 'California Restaurant' appeared in his annual calendar from 1900. Note framed coins and medals on the walls.

One collecting challenge is to acquire all of Smith's titles. Shown are examples of Smith's numismatic publications.



- 3 **Cover of paperbound edition: *Illustrated History of the United States Mint***
Inside title: *Coins and Coinage, The United States Mint, Philadelphia, History, Biography, Statistics, Work, Machinery, Products, Officials.*
Commonly known as: *Coins and Coinage.*
Published: 1881–1886 Philadelphia A 1991 article in *The Asylum* described five editions and 27 varieties.
Offered 69 times in recent sales, the most frequent of Smith's publications.
- 4 **Cover: *Visitors Guide to the U.S. Mint Philadelphia***
Inside title: *Visitor's Guide and History of the United States Mint, Philadelphia, PA.*
Commonly known as : *Visitor's Guide*
Published: 1885–1886 Philadelphia
Offered in four bindings: Full Russian leather @ \$1.50; quarter leather @ \$1.50; cloth binding @ \$1.00 and paperbound @ \$.50.
Offered twenty–three times in recent sales.

-
- 5 **Cover:** *Encyclopaedia of Gold & Silver Coins of the World*
Inside title: *Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Gold and Silver Coins of the World; Illustrating the Modern, Ancient, Current and Curious from A.D. 1885 Back to B.C. 700*
Commonly known as *Smith's Encyclopaedia*
Published: 1886 Philadelphia
Offered thirty times in recent sales.
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- 6 **Cover:** *A. M. Smith's Numismatic Manual and Coin Catalogue*
Inside title: *A. M. Smith's Illustrated Catalogue of United States and Foreign, Ancient and Modern Coins, Colonial, Continental, Confederate, National and State Currency, Indian, Antiquarian and Pre-historic Relics.*
Commonly known as: *Numismatic Manual*
Promoted as: *Coin Manual and Catalogue*
Published in 1883 Philadelphia
This is the best of three examples offered in recent sales.
-
- 7 **Cover:** *Illustrated Coin Book*
The heading on pages 4 through 18 is *Visitor's Guide to the U.S. Mint*
Published in 1900 and 1905 Minneapolis
Offered five times in recent sales.
-
- 8 **Coin Collectors' of the United States Illustrated Guide**
Nine issues of this periodical were produced between 1880 and 1886. The sale of the Champa library in 1995 included the only single offering of all nine issues.
There were eight offerings of single issues.

TITLES

It is a challenge to understand the various confusing titles of Smith's publications. Different titles frequently appear on the cover, on the inside title page and on the spine. As an example:

Title on Cover: Coins and Coinage, The United States Mint Philadelphia

Title on Title Page: Illustrated History of the United States Mint

Title on Spine: U.S. Mint and Coins

Cataloguers of numismatic literature sales have also been confused. The survey of literature sales found 31 offerings of Coins and Coinage, two offerings of Illustrated History and one offering of U.S. Mint and Coins, although these are really the same book.

Shown are three copies of the same book with three different titles:



-
- 9 **Coins and Coinage, The United States Mint, Philadelphia, History, Biography, Statistics, Work, Machinery, Products, Officials.**
 - 10 **Illustrated History of the U.S. Mint.**
 - 11 **U.S. Mint and Coins.**
-

BINDINGS

It is a challenge to acquire one title in all types of bindings.

"Binding varieties are not at all unusual in nineteenth century American numismatic books. Publishers often bound many of their works in small batches, presumably to preserve capital. Over a period of time styles and material varied, and, no doubt, on some occasions, publishers deliberately bound identical works in different styles."³

Shown are examples of Coins and Coinage in four different bindings.

12	Paper
13	Cloth
14	Half Leather
15	Full Leather

Within one type of binding, there may be varieties which may be described incompletely in literature sales.

Shown are three examples of Visitor's Guide to the United States Mint Philadelphia in cloth bindings.

-
- | | |
|----|---|
| 16 | Blue Cloth - This binding offered once in recent sales. |
|----|---|
-
- | | |
|----|---|
| 17 | Brown Cloth - Flexible Cover - Binding offered once in recent sales |
|----|---|
-
- | | |
|----|--|
| 18 | Brown Cloth - The binding most frequently offered. |
|----|--|
-

QUALITY

Shown are three examples of Smith's Encyclopaedia in cloth showing different quality bindings:



-
- | | |
|----|--|
| 19 | Left - High Quality: Cover stamped in gold, spine stamped in gold. |
|----|--|
-
- | | |
|----|---|
| 20 | Middle - Medium Quality: Cover stamped in black, spine stamped in gold. |
|----|---|
-
- | | |
|----|--|
| 21 | Right - Low Quality: Cover stamped in gold, no title on spine. |
|----|--|
-

While the copy on the right appears to be well worn, it is because it was originally low quality and has not held up well under normal usage.

Another collecting challenge is interpreting sales catalogs. If an auction catalogue described the binding as green cloth, which of these bindings would you expect?

CONTENTS

It is a challenge to understand the order of contents of Coins and Coinage.

The Fall 1991 issue of The Asylum identified five distinct editions of Coins and Coinage, each with a different order of contents⁵.

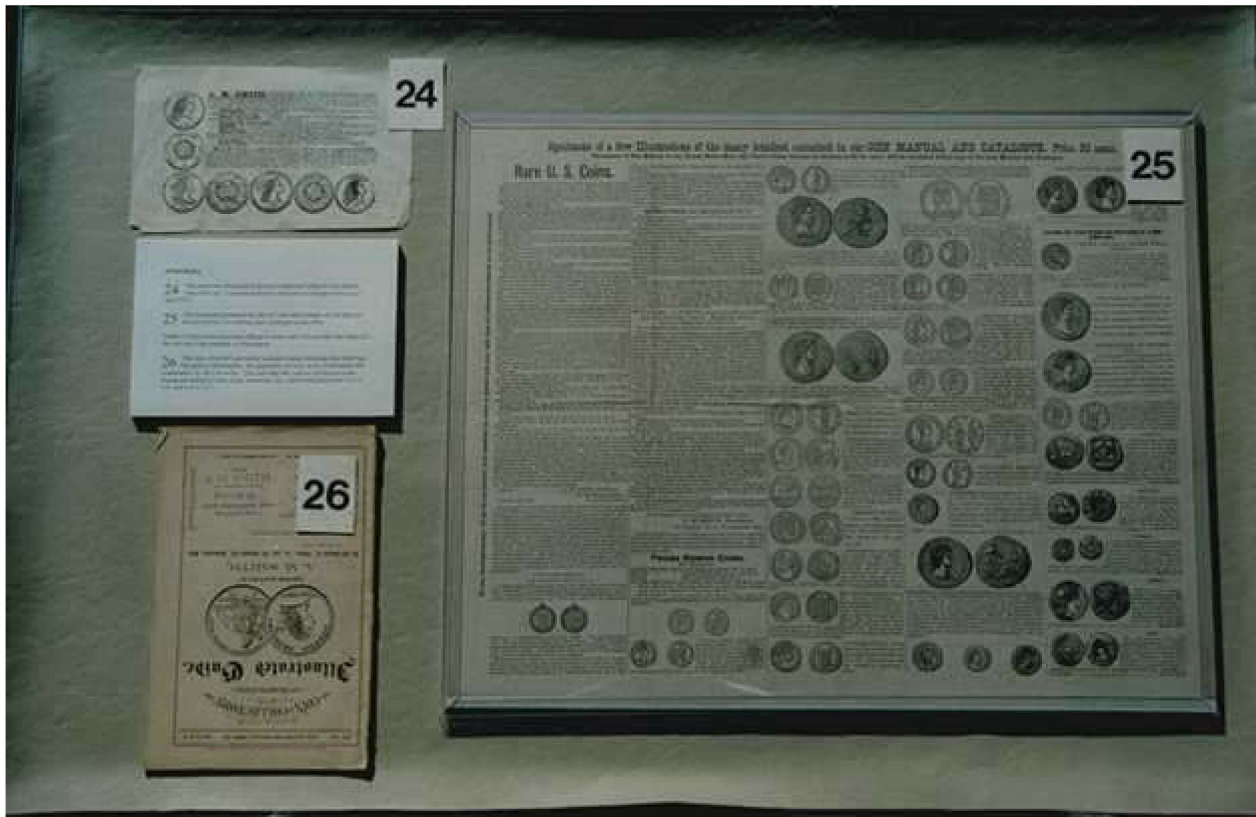
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- 22 Shown are photocopies from four editions of Coins and Coinage showing how the biography of A. Loudon Snowden appears on different pages.
- 1881 Edition: Snowden biography on page 43.
 - 1882 Edition: Snowden biography on page 48.
 - 1883 Edition: Snowden biography on page 51.
 - 1884 Edition: Snowden biography on page 37.
 - 1885 Edition: Snowden biography replaced with Greek coins, and a biography of Daniel Fox begins on page 1.

REUSE OF MATERIAL

Material from one of Smith's publications was frequently reused in later titles.

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- 23 Shown are pages 14 and 15 from Smith's Encyclopedia. At the bottom are page numbers 81 and 82 - the page numbers where these same contents appeared in his Visitor's Guide.

EPHEMERA



- 24 This piece was illustrated in Bourne's reference⁵ where it was called a "Buy-Sell list." It promoted Smith's Illustrated Catalogue to be out in April 1879.
- 25 This broadside promoted the sale of Coins and Coinage on one side (not shown) and his Coin Manual and Catalogue on the other.
Neither of these items have been offered in recent sales. It is possible that these are the only surviving examples of these pieces.
- 26 This copy of Smith's periodical includes a stamp indicating that Smith had relocated to Minneapolis. He apparently cut back on his involvement with numismatics. In 1895 he wrote, "The only time that I can or will devote to the buying and selling of coins, notes, curiosities, etc., will be Saturdays from 9 to 12 A.M. and 4 to 6 P.M."

ADVERTISING



Smith's name and address appear on the containers of many of his products. Smith also issued many advertising and promotional items that included advertising trays, ash trays, bottle openers, calendars, can openers, corkscrews, an egg boiler, fortune telling cards, a funnel, ice picks, jack knives, key fobs, letter openers, mugs, playing cards, post cards, rulers, safety razors, shoe brushes, shot glasses, a strainer, a teapot, thermometers, trade cards and yardsticks⁶. Examples of these items are shown in this case and throughout the exhibit.

NOTES

¹ Sale catalogs from Auctions by Bowers and Merena, John Bergman, Michael and Marlene Bourne, Remy Bourne, Jack Collins, Cunningham, Charles Davis, Function Associates, Orville Grady, Frank and Laurese Katen, George Kolbe, The Money tree, David Sklow, Harold Thomas and Cal Wilson.

²A.M. Smith, *Up and Down in the World or Paddle Your Own Canoe* (Minneapolis: 1891)

³George Kolbe, *Auction Sale 65 June First 1996*. Page 56.

⁴ Pete Smith, "A. M. Smith's Coins and Coinage: A trial list" *The Asylum*, Vol. IX, No. 4. (Fall, 1991)v

⁵ Remy Bourne, *Fixed Price list & Prices Paid For lists of United States Coin Dealers 1822-1900*. Ramm Communications, Inc. (Minneapolis: 1988)

⁶Ron Feldhaus, editor. *The Bottles, Breweriana and Advertising Jugs of Minnesota 1850-1920* (Minneapolis: 1987)